ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS:

IN WHICH

SOME CHARACTERS OF THE PRESENT AGE

ARE INTRODUCED.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY

S. LOW, BERWICK STREET, SOHO.

1796.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Eſſays on the various Situations in Life in which we may be placed, and the Variety of Affections to which each Individual is ſubjected, are with Deference preſented to public Peruſal.

The Author preſumes not to announce Brilliancy of Compoſition—too frequently employed in controverting

controverting generally received and ſalutary Opinions; but truſts that the Morality inculcated in them, and the friendly Admonitions they in plain Language convey, will produce the Effect which the Author in the Compoſition of them had in view—Inſtruction not unaccompanied by Entertainment.

CONTENTS.

Essay I.	On Life	—	Page 1
II.	Friendſhip	—	7
III.	Happineſs	—	15
IV.	Juſtice	—	23
V.	Pride —	—	29
VI.	Affectation	—	35
VII.	Converſation	—	41
VIII.	Grief —	—	51
IX.	Adverſity	—	57
X.	Slander —	—	63
XI.	Old Age	—	67
XII.	Death —	—	73
XIII.	Moral Rectitude	—	79
	Dream	—	87

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ESSAY I.

On Life.

IT is very common to complain of the ſhortneſs of life, and the uncertainty of its duration; and yet, notwithſtanding the abſolute conviction of that important truth, we are as laviſh of the time which compoſes it as if it were to endure for ever:—like a ſpendthrift, who, on becoming poſſeſſed of

a great treaſure, thinks he may take largely from it, and wonders and regrets when he finds that it is very quickly exhauſted. When we have the proſpect of any good which is to befall us at a certain diſtance of time, we would willingly give up that ſpace, to arrive immediately at what we wiſh for; and the longeſt life would be reduced to a very few years indeed, if our anticipating deſires were fulfilled. The child wiſhes to be a man; and when he is arrived at the ſtate of manhood he grows ſtill more impatient, and very often the beſt part of life is ſpent in the fatiguing purſuit of what lays up a ſtore of anguiſh for declining age.

If young people would but liſten to thoſe who have trod the dangerous path before

before them, they might, perhaps, avert ſome of its dangers: but that, it ſeems, is not in human nature. In the dawn of life we ſee nothing but ſmiling proſpects, and hear with impatience and diſguſt the precepts of wiſdom, which throw a gloom upon the delightful ſcenes that our imagination pictures, in lively colours, to our deluded mind. We muſt learn by our own ſad experience, that pretended friends will betray, when their intereſt leads them to it; and that the world, ſo ſeducing in its appearances, is like a maſquerade, where moſt people act a character accordingly as it ſuits their purpoſes.

Happy is the man who acquires, in time, experience ſufficient to guard againſt the ſnares of others, without

being himſelf corrupted by their dangerous example! To ſuch a man the retroſpect of life adds to his preſent happineſs. If he has met with misfortunes, through the duplicity of others, the conſciouſneſs of his own integrity, and the conſtant rectitude of his own conduct, will prove powerful motives of comfort for all the loſſes he may have ſuſtained for want of ſuſpecting others. There are ſpecies of guilt and villany, the ſuſpicion of which could never enter an honeſt mind till it has become the victim of them: therefore the virtuous man may ſometimes exult in having been deceived, as it is a proof of the fairneſs of his own mind. He looks down with pity and contempt on the wicked and artful, and laments the depravity of human nature, without

out ſuffering his native benevolence to be interrupted; for he feels that his greateſt happineſs is derived from the exerciſe of that godlike attribute. He is made happy by the teſtimony of his conſcience, and, wrapped up in the dignity of his ſentiments, appears, in every reſpect, a ſuperior being.

" The man reſolv'd, and ſteady to his truſt,
Inflexible to ill, and obſtinately juſt,
May the rude rabble's inſolence deſpiſe,
Their ſenſeleſs clamours and tumultuous cries;
The tyrant's fierceneſs he beguiles,
And the ſtern brow and the harſh voice defies,
And with ſuperior greatneſs ſmiles.

" Not the rough whirlwind, that deforms
Adria's black gulph, and vexes it with ſtorms,
The ſtubborn virtue of his ſoul can move;
Not the red arm of angry Jove,
That flings the thunder from the ſky,
And gives it rage to roar, and ſtrength to fly.

" Should

"Should the whole frame of nature round him break,
In ruin and confuſion hurl'd,
He, unconcern'd, would hear the mighty crack,
And ſtand ſecure amidſt a falling world."

HORACE, tranſlated by FRANCIS.

ESSAY II.

On Friendſhip.

NOTHING is more common than the name of a friend, though it is a treaſure which few have been ſo happy as to find. Socrates's anſwer to thoſe who found fault with the ſmallneſs of his houſe is well known—"Happy ſhould I be," ſaid the ſage, "if, ſmall as it is, I could fill it with true friends." Thoſe who are ſenſible of the worth of friendſhip are ſeldom laviſh of the title, for to beſtow it indiſcriminately upon all our acquaintance is a ſpecies of profanation; though

it

it may be done ſometimes out of policy: but we muſt not expect that calling people our friends will prompt them to act as ſuch.

In friendſhip, as well as in love, we are too apt to adorn the objects of our affections with qualities which they never poſſeſſed; and when time and experience ſhew us that we have been deceived, we complain of the falſehood of human kind, without conſidering that it is our imagination which has miſled our judgment. Perfection is not the lot of mortals; therefore no attachment can be ſteady without mutual forbearance. The leaſt reflection muſt convince us, that we ourſelves have many failings which require the patience and indulgence of others; why then ſhould we with-hold

from

from our friends what we expect from them? We ſometimes blame thoſe whom we love, for not having the little attentions for us, which we think we ſhould have for them were they in our ſituation; but their feelings may be different from ours, and perhaps, did it occur to them, they would be highly gratified in doing thoſe very things which we think it unkind in them to omit. But, above all things, let us never forget that it is one of the moſt ſacred duties of friendſhip to throw a veil over ſuch defects as a ſtrict intimacy may lead to diſcover in the moſt perfect of human beings.

Without candour there can be no friendſhip: when we find that thoſe with whom we converſe fail in that reſpect, it raiſes ſuſpicion, and ſtops our

 confidence.

confidence. There are people who have a proud imperious temper, which takes offence at every trifle; and ſuch is their conceit, that not implicitly to follow their advice is what they cannot forgive: like eaſtern tyrants, they will be ſurrounded by ſlaves. When pretended friends ſhew ſuch a diſpoſition, it is high time to root them out of our affections. It muſt be owned that it is ſometimes very painful to our feelings; but it muſt be done, unleſs we are willing to ſubmit to the moſt abject ſlavery; for when once people flatter themſelves that their ſuperior underſtanding entitles them to direct others, and that they ſhew great kindneſs in taking the trouble to do it, the leaſt deviation from the rules they preſcribe is reſented with aſperity, and

their

their friendſhip wears the aſpect of hatred.

Happy are they who can meet with minds congenial to their own, who will gently point out their faults, not to exult over them, but becauſe they wiſh the objects of their affections to be more perfect. It is very natural to be pleaſed at ſeeing thoſe whom we love and eſteem applauded by others; it gratifies our pride, which is flattered by the praiſes beſtowed upon our friends; and we find ourſelves peculiarly happy in ſharing the affections of thoſe whom impartial judges admire and approve.

Without friendſhip, life is a burden to a feeling mind; friendſhip is the only balm that can alleviate our griefs and calm our troubles. What a ſatisfaction it is to think aloud with

one in whoſe diſcretion we can ſafely confide! who takes no other advantage of knowing our moſt ſecret thoughts, than that of correcting our errors, and ſtrengthening our weakneſs; who kindly raiſes our ſpirits when depreſſed, and prudently checks thoſe hopes which might produce bitter diſappointments. With ſuch a friend, the want of fortune will be felt *only* as it deprives us of the ſatisfaction of ſharing it with thoſe who prove themſelves worthy of it: for, though it is not in the power of gold and diamonds to reward diſintereſted friendſhip, there is ſtill a great pleaſure in offering both at its ſhrine.

" Friendſhip, peculiar boon of Heaven,
The noble mind's delight and pride,
To men and angels only given,
To all the lower world denied—

" While

" While Love, unknown among the bleſt,
Parent of thouſand wild deſires,
The ſavage and the human breaſt
Torments alike with raging fires:

" With bright but yet deſtructive gleam,
Alike o'er all his lightnings fly;
Thy lambent glories only beam
Around the fav'rites of the ſky.

" Thy gentle flows of guiltleſs joys
On fools and villains ne'er deſcend;
In vain for thee the tyrant ſighs,
And hugs a flatterer for a friend.

" Directreſs of the brave and juſt,
O guide us through life's darkſome way!
And let the tortures of miſtruſt
On ſelfiſh boſoms only prey!

" Nor ſhall thine ardours ceaſe to glow,
When ſouls to bliſsful climes remove:
What rais'd our Virtue here below,
Shall aid our happineſs above."

JOHNSON.

ESSAY III.

On Happineſs.

TO be happy is the aim of all humankind; but very few can boaſt, with truth, of having attained even a temporary happineſs. An active life, where the mind is employed in forming ſchemes which require the exertion of the body to put them in execution, is the moſt likely to procure that deſirable end. A life merely ſpeculative is ſeldom happy; for the mind is too apt to dwell upon what is beyond its reach, and the mortification it feels by being frequently diſappointed in its purſuits corrodes

corrodes its powers. Nothing appears cheerful or pleaſing to thoſe whoſe mind is diſſatisfied, for their imagination tinctures with dark colours every ſurrounding object. The ſoul is ſo cloſely united to its mortal frame, that when the one languiſhes the other ſoon decays; and though the diſeaſes of the body are far leſs powerful, they generally act alſo in their turn upon the underſtanding. What delighted us moſt when in health, becomes tireſome and inſipid when we labour under illneſs. Nothing proves more the ſuperiority of the mind, than to ſee it ſtill capable of gratifications though the body be oppreſſed with pain.

EUGENIA, in the courſe of a few years, has experienced moſt of the evils which are incident to human life; but

but the angelic turn of her mind has enabled her to bear illneſs and misfortune without repining: happy in the rectitude of her ſentiments and the firm hopes of an hereafter, ſhe glides ſerenely down the ſtream of life without murmuring at the diſpenſations of Providence. Amiable EUGENIA! thy gentle ſpirit makes thee, even in this world, partake of a portion of the happineſs enjoyed by thy kindred angels!

The ſureſt way of being happy is to regulate our paſſions, that all within may be tranquil and ſerene; for without poſſeſſing a good temper it is impoſſible to enjoy the comforts of life: it is that which brightens every ſcene around us, and makes life a bleſſing to ourſelves and to others. Thoſe who

have an ill temper, accompanied with a good heart, are in a conſtant torment; for they are often prompted to ſay and to do things which, on reflection, make them abſolutely miſerable. It may be truly ſaid, that an ill temper carries its puniſhment with it. If we did but reflect upon the littleneſs of thoſe things which frequently ruffle our temper, we ſhould be aſhamed to have ſuffered ſuch trifles to diſturb our intellectual peace.

As our thoughts and affections depend, in a great meaſure, on the conſtitution of the body, particular care ſhould be taken to keep the blood in a proper circulation. A celebrated writer* has well deſcribed its effects, when he ſays: "What incomprehen-

* Voltaire.

ſible

ſible mechaniſm has ſubdued the organs of the body to the impreſſion of the mind? How can a ſingle painful thought occaſion the diſorder of the blood, and how does the blood in its turn carry its irregularities into the human underſtanding? What is that unknown fluid, of which the exiſtence is certain, which, more quick, more active than light itſelf, runs in leſs than an inſtant into all the canals of life, and produces the ſenſations, memory, ſadneſs or joy, reaſon or folly, calls with horror to the mind what one would forget, and makes a rational being an object of admiration or of pity?"——The foregoing ſhort extract comprehends all that can be ſaid on the ſubject: to attempt to enlarge upon it

might therefore be deemed preſumptuous.

The means of attaining real happineſs are thus elegantly pointed out by that charming poet who is ſo juſtly the boaſt of this country:

Know then this truth (enough for man to know)
"Virtue alone is happineſs below!"
The only point where human bliſs ſtands ſtill,
And taſtes the good without the fall to ill;
Where only merit conſtant pay receives,
Is bleſt in what it takes, and what it gives;
The joy unequall'd, if its end it gain,
And if it loſe, attended with no pain:
Without ſatiety, though e'er ſo bleſt,
And but more reliſh'd as the more diſtreſt:
The broadeſt mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
Leſs pleaſing far than Virtue's very tears:
Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd;
Never elated while one man's oppreſt;
Never dejected, while another's bleſt;
And where no wants, no wiſhes can remain,
Since but to wiſh more virtue is to gain.

See the ſole bliſs Heav'n could on all beſtow,
Which who but feels can taſte, but thinks can know!
Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad muſt miſs; the good, untaught, will find;
Slave to no ſect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature up to Nature's God;
Purſues that chain which links th' immenſe deſign,
Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
Sees, that no being any bliſs can know,
But touches ſome above, and ſome below;
Learns, from this union of the riſing whole,
The firſt, laſt purpoſe of the human ſoul;
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in love of God, and love of man.

For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens ſtill and opens on his ſoul;
Till lengthen'd on to Faith, and unconfin'd,
It pours the bliſs that fills up all the mind.
He ſees why Nature plants in man alone
Hope of known bliſs, and faith in bliſs unknown.
(Nature, whoſe dictates to no other kind
Are giv'n in vain, but what they ſeek they find)
Wiſe is her preſent; ſhe connects in this
His greateſt virtue with his greateſt bliſs;
At once his own bright proſpect to be bleſt,
And ſtrongeſt motive to aſſiſt the reſt.

Self-

Self-love thus puſh'd to ſocial, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's bleſſing thine.
Is this too little for the boundleſs heart?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
Graſp the whole worlds of reaſon, life, and ſenſe,
In one cloſe ſyſtem of benevolence:
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliſs but height of charity.
God loves from whole to parts: but human ſoul
Muſt riſe from individual to the whole.
Self-love but ſerves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the ſmall pebble ſtirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle ſtraight ſucceeds,
Another ſtill, and ſtill another ſpreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, firſt it will embrace;
His country next, and next all human race:
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of ev'ry kind;
Earth ſmiles around, with boundleſs bounty bleſt,
And heav'n beholds its image in his breaſt.

POPE.

ESSAY IV.

On Juſtice.

MOST people would be highly offended at being told that they are not juſt, yet very few are ſtrictly ſo. There are many inſtances of injuſtice in ſociety which the law does not reach, and it is commonly thought ſufficient to be ſheltered from it: therefore, whatever is done beyond what the law requires is decorated with the pompous name of generoſity. Hence ſome ſuffer themſelves to be called generous, and exult in the appellation, when they are ſcarcely juſt. It is impoſſible

poſſible for legiſlators to point out the innumerable actions which are unjuſt, but every one has an internal monitor which (if conſulted) will ſupply the deficiency. It is but too common to ſee juſtice become the victim of vanity. There are people who, to acquire the honourable name of being charitable and generous, will be rapacious upon their friends and relations, and give away, oſtentatiouſly, a ſmall ſhare of what they have acquired by the baſeſt means; which procures them reſpect and admiration from thoſe unacquainted with the ſource and motive of their ſeeming good actions. Thus they are mean and unjuſt in private, to have their vanity gratified in the world.

ORONTES

ORONTES keeps a good table and a ſplendid equipage: when he gives entertainments, nothing is ſpared to make every thing agreeable to his gueſts: he ſubſcribes largely towards the ſupport of the poor: Is not then ORONTES both generous and charitable? Every appearance proclaims him ſuch; he is, notwithſtanding, unjuſt to the higheſt degree. He has ſpent what ſhould have been the portion of his ſiſters, who adored him; and the profuſeneſs of his table is ſupported by the neighbouring farmers, whom he never pays. Tradeſmen have become bankrupts, through not receiving what he owed them: he takes advantage of the kindneſs of his friends to borrow money from them, which he never returns. Such is the inſide character of one who

ſtill enjoys the admiration of the world; and when at laſt his ruin ſhall be completed, his paraſites will lament, that a man of ſuch a generous diſpoſition ſhould have met with misfortunes.

To be juſt, is the firſt duty of human-kind: but it would ſeem as if the name of that virtue were now thought too vulgar, as the moſt common act of juſtice is ſeldom mentioned without its being ſtyled generous; which is, no doubt, owing to the extreme courteſy of this refined world, now ſo much accuſtomed to give titles beyond the rank, that its politeneſs muſt be extended alſo to the virtues and duties of life.

THEODOSIUS is born of a family whoſe appendage is univerſal benevolence. He ſhines in public life, and his

his exact juſtice makes his character reſpected by all who have any dealings with him. His judgment and abilities are ſuch, that he attends to the welfare of his country at large, without neglecting the intereſt of individuals. As his goodneſs is generally known, it is frequently encroached upon; yet he never rebukes with ſeverity, and commiſerates where he cannot aſſiſt. He knows that it is natural for the unfortunate to ſeek protection, and that adverſity is apt to ſolace itſelf with unreaſonable hopes. This he laments, when it is not in his power to effect the too ſanguine wiſhes of thoſe who labour under misfortunes. THEODOSIUS is never actuated by vanity; his actions ſpring from a nobler motive: the rectitude of his principles makes

him juſt without pride, charitable without oſtentation, and generous without boaſting of it. His juſtice is not confined to the word of the law; it is extended to the utmoſt limits that a delicate conſcience can point out. When he has reached thoſe bounds, he indulges the native propenſities of his heart, by charitably relieving the diſtreſſed, and generouſly promoting the ſatisfaction of his friends and acquaintance.

THEODOSIUS has often met with ingratitude, but it has not influenced his conduct; for the inward ſatisfaction of his mind convinces him that

"Virtue can always be its own reward."

ESSAY V.

On Pride.

THOSE who have too great a ſhare of pride can never be happy; for it makes them liable to conſtant mortifications, and puts it in the power of the meaneſt individual to ruffle their temper, and conſequently to deſtroy their peace of mind.

BELINDA is very apt to think herſelf ſlighted in the world, becauſe, now that ſhe is at a public place, ſhe does not meet with that marked reſpect which was paid to her when ſhe lived in the country, where her father had

had a large eſtate, and was highly conſidered in his neighbourhood. When BELINDA appeared at the aſſembly in the ſmall town of ———, ſhe was there the firſt in rank and accompliſhments; but now ſhe is loſt in the crowd, and is not noticed by any particular marks of reſpect or admiration. This wounds her pride, and embitters her life: ſhe takes no pleaſure in going out, for ſhe generally brings home diſagreeable reflections on the imaginary ſlights ſhe has met with, and her features expreſs the peeviſhneſs of her temper. Thus an exceſſive pride deprives BELINDA of the power of pleaſing, and renders uſeleſs thoſe accompliſhments which both nature and art have beſtowed upon her.

Pride

Pride renders its votaries the moſt abject ſlaves in the world, by making their eaſe and happineſs depend entirely upon the caprice of others. Such is the inconſiſtency of that paſſion, that it often makes thoſe who are under its influence meanly court the notice of people whom they deſpiſe. Some, to raiſe their conſequence with thoſe with whom they converſe, boaſt of having a fortune which they never poſſeſſed, and of being intimately acquainted with people to whom they never ſpoke; and, as common civility forbids the appearance of doubting their veracity, they flatter themſelves that they impoſe upon their hearers, whoſe reſpect for them will of courſe, they think, be greatly increaſed—when, in reality, they excite nothing but contempt,

tempt, and ſink themſelves much beneath their original level.

Inſtead of exalting, people often degrade themſelves by boaſting upon all occaſions how frequently they are diſtinguiſhed by their ſuperiors. They thus obtrude on thoſe who would not otherwiſe have attended to it, an idea of their inferiority: whereas, had they leſs diſplayed the pride and importance derived from their elevated connexions, they might ſtill have been conſidered as equal to thoſe whom themſelves acknowledge to be ſo greatly above them.

ARISTUS had formerly a very conſiderable property, which he has loſt through misfortunes. Whilſt he was in affluence his acquaintance and friendſhip were courted by many, who profeſſed

ſeſſed that his perſonal merit was their only inducement; yet now that his fortune is gone they avoid him, becauſe their pride can receive no gratification from appearing to be acquainted with one who is reduced to live upon a ſmall income. ARISTUS is far from feeling mortified by the contempt of ſuch reptiles; for he is bleſſed with a dignity of mind, which ſhelters him from being cruſhed by the inſulting pride of the world. Thoſe who were jealous of his proſperity, are vexed that he does not appear humbled; and they give the diſgraceful appellation of pride to that noble ſentiment, which the Supreme Being beſtows ſometimes upon the unfortunate, that they may not loſe ſight of their divine origin.

ESSAY VI.

On Affectation.

NOTHING can be more diſagreeable than affectation. We are always apt to ſuſpect that the affected in their manners have a weak underſtanding; and if it reach their expreſſions, we are inclined to doubt of the goodneſs of their hearts. Violent exclamations upon trifling incidents, and pompous profeſſions of eſteem and friendſhip, have ſeldom the appearance of truth and ſincerity, which, when genuine, need not any varniſh. The leſs people feel, the more ſometimes will they expreſs; for, conſcious of their want of

ſentiment, they endeavour to conceal the deficiency by the ſtrength of their expreſſions. They ſhould be conſidered like actors upon the ſtage, who exert themſelves to the utmoſt of their abilities in hopes of being rewarded for their trouble.

Some will make a diſplay of tenderneſs and humanity, in their converſation, whoſe actions diſcover that, in reality, their hearts are callous to every noble feeling. Others will boaſt of their courage and magnanimity, who, when put to the teſt, are found equally deficient in both; for, wherever there is affectation, there is generally a total want of the merit and virtues which are affected.

Were Vice to appear in its own garb, it would be ſo horrid that it never

never could effect its wicked purpoſes: of neceſſity therefore to conceal its uglineſs it puts on a maſk, and, to aſſume the appearance of Virtue, has recourſe to affectation. Hence the difficulty of knowing the real character of perſons, unleſs we have an opportunity of ſeeing their actions: and even then we may be deceived; for, if they are aware of being obſerved, they will act in ſuch a manner as to gain the confidence and good will of thoſe who obſerve them, and thereby acquire more means to effect their purpoſes. It is ſometimes in trifling circumſtances that people diſcover what they are in reality; for, then, not being upon their guard, they lay aſide affectation to follow their natural propenſity to mean and contemptible actions.

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Some perſons ſeem to have no other meaning but that of making themſelves appear ridiculous: and if ſuch be their aim, they effectually attain it; for every one muſt be diverted at the variety of airs and graces which they practiſe to attract attention. Their performance is as entertaining as that of a group of monkeys might be, and ſhould not fail to be equally rewarded. Poſſeſſing the faculty of ſpeech, they attempt, ſometimes, to be miſchievous by their chattering; but that being as ridiculous as their manners, it but adds the more to the diverſion of thoſe who witneſs their follies;—though it muſt be owned, that to ſee human beings degrade themſelves to a level with the moſt contemptible creatures frequently raiſes a painful ſentiment of pity.

DORIMOND

DORIMOND has been told that ſome men of learning and genius were negligent in their dreſs; therefore he makes it a point to be a ſloven: but were DORIMOND capable of reflection, he would ſoon be convinced, that it was the ſuperior mental faculties of thoſe celebrated men, which made the world overlook their defects; and as DORIMOND can have no claim to great intellectual merit, he only diſguſts by his ridiculous affectation.

ACASTUS poſſeſſes a dignity of mind which ſets him above affecting any qualities he does not really poſſeſs: he is not without faults, but they are trifling, and appear only as light ſhades to the brightneſs of his character. The neatneſs of his dreſs and the elegant ſimplicity of his manners beſpeak the natural refinement

refinement of his ſentiments: he ſcorns to make profeſſions of friendſhip where he cannot eſteem: ſteady and indulgent to his friends, his good will towards them does not evaporate in words: his politeneſs proceeds from the goodneſs of his heart; always therefore it is eaſy and unaffected: his affability is never inſulting; for he does not appear to think himſelf ſuperior, in any reſpect, to thoſe with whom he converſes. ACASTUS has no need to affect courage and humanity; for he poſſeſſes both in their higheſt degree, without claiming any merit from the poſſeſſion: the more he is known, the more is he eſteemed; and his character will be held out as a pattern to future ages.

ESSAY VII.

On Converſation.

THE faculty of imparting our thoughts to others, and hearing theirs in return, would be the greateſt means of human happineſs, if unregulated paſſions did not intervene ſo as to render it ſometimes an evil inſtead of a bleſſing. Thoſe who poſſeſs the talent of ſhining in converſation are too apt to indulge in the pleaſure of being attended to, and generally ſuffer their exulting ſpirits to carry them beyond the limits of reaſon: hence it is that people of great abilities, when they

ſhew too marked a conſciouſneſs of their ſuperiority, are ſhunned rather than ſought after. Pride, that innate paſſion of the mind, may liſten for awhile with ſatisfaction; but, if once it feel itſelf wounded by contempt, it ſoon becomes irreconcileably irritated. Thoſe who entirely engroſs the converſation ſhew at leaſt that they conſider themſelves more capable of entertaining than any one preſent; which preſumption cannot fail of giving diſguſt. Approbation and applauſe are free gifts, which are ſeldom beſtowed on thoſe who ſeem arrogantly to expect them as their due.

HONORIUS is a man of learning and genius; but his egotiſm is ſo conſpicuous, that, though he ſhould perform the nobleſt actions, it would make him loſe the merit of them: he is always

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the hero of his ſtory. "*I* ſaid," "*I* did," "*I* adviſed," are words ſo much in uſe with him, that it betrays his exceſſive vanity even to thoſe who ſee him only for a ſhort time. His exact juſtice, his boundleſs charity, and, above all, his extreme generoſity, are the common topics of his converſation: and yet, though he diſplays his character to ſo great advantage, he is not rewarded either by eſteem or admiration; becauſe his oſtentation plainly diſcovers that vanity is the leading principle of all his actions.

EUGENIUS (very different from HONORIUS) never, or ſeldom, ſpeaks of himſelf; his converſation is both improving and entertaining: if he ſee any one diffident, he politely and courteouſly encourages him, and ſeems more gratified

by liſtening to others than by engroſſing their attention. When he ſpeaks, he delights all his auditors, and makes them regret that he does not ſay more: the ſuperiority of his talents is allowed by all who converſe with him, and every one feels a ſecret ſatisfaction in doing juſtice to a man whoſe behaviour diſplays neither pride nor vanity.

The advantages of rational converſation are innumerable: by exerting the faculties of the mind it increaſes its powers, and awakens new ideas, which, perhaps, would never have occurred but for the ſtimulus of ſocial intercourſe. The ſtudious man, after poring the whole day over his books, is convinced in the evening, that more real happineſs is to be found in ſociety; and though his acquaintances may be inferior,

inferior, in ſome reſpects, to the ſages of antiquity, yet he finds himſelf more gratified by their preſence and converſation, than he was in the morning by the mental company of the moſt famous authors.

Happy are they who from amongſt their acquaintances can ſelect a few ſincere friends, in whoſe judgment and diſcretion they may ſafely confide! It is then that converſation becomes a divine pleaſure; each anxious thought is removed, and the troubles of the mind are lulled to reſt. But that refined enjoyment is not to be expected in general converſation, into which to intrude our own private concerns would appear both ridiculous and impertinent.

It is very ſurpriſing, that the talent of narrating is not more cultivated;

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as thoſe who ſucceed in it are always ſure of making themſelves agreeable: for nothing unbends the mind ſo much as liſtening to the relation of facts, when they are well told. Some know how to make trifles appear intereſting, whilſt others will labour out but a tedious ſtory from the moſt intereſting materials.

One would think that it might be eaſy to inſtruct young people in the pleaſing and uſeful art of narration, by making them read anecdotes and afterwards repeat them. That method, with proper inſtruction, might prove uſeful in the acquiſition of that agreeable talent, the value of which is much beyond what is commonly thought. That it is one of the chief materials for converſation, no one will deny; therefore

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the cultivation of it is of ſome importance, and worthy of being attended to. Moſt people can ſpeak, but very few know how to captivate the attention of others; and unleſs the manner and delivery of the ſpeaker be pleaſing, learning becomes pedantic, and humour inſipid. Many ſenſible people appear to great diſadvantage in company, though they have a large ſtock of ideas, from not poſſeſſing the habit of arrangement ſo as to have them always ready for converſation; the rapidity of which is ſuch, that the moment for ſaying things in a proper time is ſoon irrecoverably loſt; whilſt others, with ſcarcely any ideas, have ſuch a flow of words, that ſuperficial hearers, pleaſed with the brilliant varniſh of their flimſy arguments,

guments, will think them poſſeſſed of ſuperior ſenſe and abilities.

The foregoing characters may in ſome degree be compared to HORTENSIA and FULVIA. The former is a fine woman, poſſeſſed of immenſe property; but ſo extremely indolent, that ſhe is ſeldom fit to be ſeen. When company is announced, ſhe huddles on her dreſs in ſuch a manner as makes her appear both mean and awkward.

FULVIA is far from being handſome, and has but a ſmall income; but, with the aſſiſtance of coſmetics and a gay dreſs, ſhe impoſes herſelf upon the world as a pretty woman, and is generally thought to be poſſeſſed of a large fortune.

If men of ſenſe would beſtow half the trouble in adorning their thoughts,

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that fops beſtow upon their dreſs, it would make their merit conſpicuous, and enſure to them that reſpect and admiration which are ſo juſtly their due.

ESSAY VIII.

On Grief.

OF all the feelings which affect and corrode the human mind, grief is the moſt difficult to be deſcribed; very few know the extreme poignancy of it: and this is a happy circumſtance for the world in general; for, as it diſables from attending to the different purſuits of life, it would prove hurtful to the ends of ſociety.

Few, very few know how to adminiſter comfort. Some will ſet up themſelves as examples, and boaſt of the fortitude with which they can ſup-

port the troubles of life; but, as that appears like exultation, the afflicted mind, already too ſenſible of its dejected ſtate, revolts at it. Others, by an unſeaſonable mirth and ill-timed jokes, plunge daggers into the heart. In ſuch a ſtate the greateſt perhaps the only comfort is, to communicate our ſorrows to perſons of congenial ſentiments, and of feelings ſimilar to our own, who, by kindly ſympathizing with us, take a ſhare of the burden with which we are ſo heavily oppreſſed; and, by gently endeavouring to ſtart ſome intereſting ſubject, divert our mind from its afflicting thoughts.

The loſs of fortune is trifling when compared to the loſs of thoſe we loved. Who would not willingly part with every poſſeſſion ſooner than be deprived

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of a beloved friend, who once loſt can never be reſtored? That ſad conviction caſts a gloom upon every thing that ſurrounds us; the ſun, ſo cheering to all nature, becomes painful to our ſight, and the gaiety of its rays ſtrikes a ſadneſs into our ſoul. The ſmiling verdure of the fields, and the beauty of the diſtant proſpects, are no more enjoyed; for they recall to our mind the pleaſure we formerly had in the contemplation of thoſe objects, when we were bleſſed with the company of thoſe whoſe eyes are now cloſed for ever. If any good befall us, we regret that it cannot be enjoyed with thoſe whom we loved; we therefore become indifferent to the concerns of life, and ſometimes, by neglecting our affairs, add to the bitterneſs of grief by depriving

priving ourſelves of what might in time have proved a comfort to us.

We dread to go from home, as we can no more hope to be welcomed, on our return, by the benign ſmiles of delighted friendſhip. "The loſs of a friend," ſays Pope, in one of his letters, "is the loſs of life: after that is gone from us, it is but a gentler decay, and waſting and lingering a little longer."

The cheering hope that we ſhall meet our friends when we have, like them, ſhaken off our mortal frame, ought to animate our endeavours in conquering thoſe griefs by which the faculties of the ſoul are benumbed, that we may be enabled to fulfil the duties of life, the diſcharge of which, according to the

the ſtrict principles of juſtice, will entitle us to eternal bliſs.

Our minds, refined in the crucible of affliction, become more ſuſceptible of divine contemplations; we conſider every day that paſſes, as a ſtep that leads us to that time when, freed from the troubles of this world, human life will appear to us like a diſturbed dream: then kindred ſouls ſhall meet, and, in the enjoyment of celeſtial pleaſures, loſe all remembrance of the griefs and toils which attend this tranſitory ſtate.

ESSAY IX.

On Adverſity.

NONE can know what value is ſet upon their real merit, till they experience adverſity; that is the hand which tears off the deluding veil which, but too often, conceals ſelf-intereſt. When in proſperity, we are apt to flatter ourſelves that the regard and attentions we meet with are ſincere, and void of intereſted motives: but the ſad truth is ſoon made known by the ſtriking alteration in the deportment of our acquaintance, who, when informed of the change of our fortune, turn away

as if afraid of ſome contagious diſeaſe. Such behaviour proceeds from a conſciouſneſs of their own baſeneſs, which induces an apprehenſion that, were they to continue an appearance of kindneſs, advantage might be taken of it by thoſe who are in adverſity. Strangers to every liberal ſentiment, they cannot comprehend that adverſe fortune, though it may depreſs a virtuous mind, never degrades it to a mean impoſition on generous kindneſs. Conſcious of not having the means of return, the elevated mind is cautious of incurring obligation, but to thoſe to whom it is attracted by a real eſteem, and whoſe ſentiments are too exalted to be influenced by a change of fortune; and even then a delicate mind avoids being a burden to others.

It is rather ſurpriſing, that men of independent fortune have not ſometimes the curioſity to come at the knowledge of their true friends; which they might eaſily contrive, by having it reported that ſome unforeſeen event has deprived them of their property, or, at leaſt, reduced their circumſtances ſo as to prevent them from entertaining their friends as uſual. This would be an excellent comedy; and the more entertaining, as the chief actor in it would be the perſon moſt intereſted in the experiment. The denouement might be brought on, by requeſting the few real friends to meet on a certain day, to raiſe a contribution for the relief of the poor ſufferer; when, inſtead of parting with their money, they ſhould

each be preſented with a ſuperb piece of plate, with this motto——

"SACRED TO FRIENDSHIP IN ADVERSITY."

A ſplendid entertainment ſhould conclude the whole, and muſic proclaim the merit of the faithful gueſts.

It is impoſſible for thoſe who have never felt adverſity to form an idea of the many evils which attend it. To be obliged to give up all the comforts we have enjoyed through life; to part with faithful and affectionate ſervants, a convenient houſe, an agreeable ſociety; to be deprived of the ſatisfaction of relieving the neceſſitous, and to be thought mean and uncharitable, unleſs we proclaim aloud our own diſtreſs, which would be a ſubject of triumph and exultation to that ſet of malicious

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beings who rejoice in the misfortunes of others:—theſe and a thouſand more pangs attend on adverſity, and make thoſe who feel it wait impatiently for the time when the diſembodied ſoul ſhall be no more affected by the wants and infirmities of its mortal frame.

" Unhappy he! who feels each neighbour's woe,
" Yet no relief, no comfort can beſtow.
" Unhappy too, who feels each kind eſſay,
" And for great favours has but words to pay;
" Who, ſcornful of the flatterer's fawning art,
" Dreads even to pour his gratitude of heart!"

ESSAY X.

On Slander.

AMONGST the numerous evils which imbitter life, the moſt difficult to be avoided is ſlander. In vain may you indulge the idea that your conduct through life has been ſuch as to ſcreen you from its attack; the leſs there is to be ſaid againſt you, the more ſcope will there be for the fertility of a wicked imagination. The fairer a character is, the more delight has ſlander in blotting it; and be it pure and ſpotleſs as a ſheet of blank paper, ſlander will diſcolour it with the fouleſt accuſations. A propenſity

penſity to this vice is encouraged by the attention it receives in the world, which never fails to liſten with pleaſure to what is related to the diſadvantage of others. Is it owing to a natural malignity in the human mind? Or is it that, by being made acquainted with the faults and vices of others, we are the better enabled to reconcile ourſelves to our own?

Some people have a diabolical knack at injuring the character of others without ſcarcely uttering a word: they well know that an ill-natured hint, or a ſignificant wink, is ſufficient to ſet the imagination at work, and that the canvaſs they give will be ſoon covered over with the darkeſt colours. How is it poſſible that ſuch infernal beings are not only ſuffered, but careſſed in the world!

world! when the leaſt reflection muſt convince us that we are equally at their mercy, and that our own character may ſoon fall a prey to their deteſtable artifice. We cautiouſly avoid unneceſſarily viſiting a place where ſome peſtilential diſeaſe rages; at the ſame time that we meet, and ſometimes eagerly ſeek, the company of thoſe whoſe envenomed words embitter if not deſtroy all the enjoyments of life.

A character that has been once aſperſed by ſlander becomes more liable to ſuſpicion, notwithſtanding its having been cleared by the evidence of truth. Like as the leaſt accident opens again, and cauſes to bleed afreſh, a deep wound cloſed by a tender ſcar; ſo the ſmalleſt appearance againſt the conduct of the perſon who has been unjuſtly

defamed will be credited as a fact, the imputation of former deeds will be recollected, but the juſtification totally forgotten. "Throw dirt enough," ſays the Demon, "ſome of it will ſtick." Strange it is, that human beings can ſo far forget the dignity of their nature as to become the agents of evil, and that they will degrade themſelves, by depriving their fellow-creatures of what is beyond any price in the world——A FAIR CHARACTER!

"Who ſteals my purſe ſteals traſh; 'tis ſomething, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and may be ſlave to thouſands:
But he that filches from me my GOOD NAME
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

SHAKESPEARE.

ESSAY XI.

On Old Age.

SUCH is the rapidity of time, that ſoon will thoſe who now boaſt of youth arrive at that period which is termed old age: but they muſt not repine at what is inevitable; they will, by degrees, be reconciled to what may appear to them, "whoſe blood runs high," ſo terrible. Every ſtage of life has its comforts, which are ſuited to it. The mild ſerenity derived from the retroſpect of a life well ſpent, gives an idea of the progreſs towards the heavenly manſions, far more pleaſing to the

beholders than the giddy pleaſures of youth. What makes old age inſupportable to ſome people is, that they, unfortunately, retain the ſame propenſities at fifty which they had at twenty; and when that is the caſe, they muſt certainly be miſerable. Were people of this deſcription to ſee grown-up people fond of the toys of childhood, they would conſider it an egregious folly: yet ſuch is their own caſe, when they betray an eagerneſs after the dreſs and pleaſures which are only becoming to youth.

When CLARINDA ſtands up in the ſprightly dance, her head ornamented with the nodding plume, we are ready to pronounce that common ſenſe is flown away, or that CLARINDA ſtands up, willingly, as a foil to youth and beauty.

beauty. But as the latter is not probable, we cannot help lamenting that a lady who in other reſpects appears a ſenſible woman ſhould thus render herſelf ſo ridiculous.

It is in vain to attempt to conquer old age: the only way to ſoften its ravages is to ſubmit to it, without a peeviſh reluctance, and without aiming to retain what time has lawfully taken away. We are naturally inclined to pay reſpect and attention to elderly people, provided they do not leſſen that reverence by affecting an appearance of youth; for ſuch an affectation is a proof that their mental faculties have not ripened with their outward appearance; which makes us unwilling to pay homage to the ſhadow of wiſdom.

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There are ſome few favoured beings, who unite with the vivacity of youth the experience and ſagacity acquired by a long life. EUPHEMIA, though near eighty years old, was lively without affectation; the faculties of her mind were not in the leaſt impaired, and the benignity of her temper had kept off the wrinkles of old age. She left the world with the ſmile of benevolence upon her countenance. Her appearance when alive reconciled to old age, and her eaſy departure from human life reconciled to that awful moment which no mortal can avoid.

It is ſurpriſing, that people whom a long experience has taught how little real happineſs is derived from the vanities of the world, will ſtill perſiſt in

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the purſuit of them, and be anxious after the acquiſition of riches, when they have, ſometimes, more than they know how to diſpoſe of. When the journey of life draws towards its end, one would think it would be natural for the weary traveller to wiſh for reſt, inſtead of entirely exhauſting himſelf by adding fruitleſs toils to his pilgrimage.

ESSAY XII.

On Death.

FROM the moment of our birth we may be conſidered as living under the ſentence of death, for whoever is born muſt die. Yet to think of it continually, ſo as to prevent us from enjoying the innocent comforts of life, would be abſurd; but to live in ſuch a manner as not to be afraid of dying, is the perfection of wiſdom. So many millions have departed before us, and we witneſs, daily, ſo many inſtances of the precarioufneſs of human life, that it is aſtoniſhing that the idea of death

is not more familiar to us. When we hear of any one of our acquaintance having left this world, we are as much ſurpriſed at it as if it were an event quite uncommon, without conſidering that we ourſelves ſhall ſoon alſo take our departure. "It is, no doubt, hard to die; but it is often a great comfort to think that we are not to live for ever in this world."

Thoſe who have experienced a temporary death have ſeldom expreſſed any great ſatisfaction at being recalled to the troubles of life, and it is not uncommon to ſee young people diſguſted with it; which appears as if they had ſome faint recollection of having enjoyed a happier ſtate. We grow reconciled to life as to an habitation, which at firſt appeared full of inconveniences,

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but which a conſtant reſidence makes us overlook, ſo as to become at laſt afraid of removing from it.

Whether we live fifty or a hundred years comes to the ſame, and is of no moment to the immenſity of time. We are dead to the years that are paſt, which will never return; and we live only in the preſent inſtant, which flies away whilſt we are endeavouring to graſp at it. Every moment leads us to that ſtate, where the ſoul will enjoy freely, without being obſtructed by human frailties, thoſe ſublime truths which are too elevated for the comprehenſion of mortal beings. Our body ſhall return to the earth from whence it came, and will ſtill be uſeful to never-ceaſing vegetation; we ſhall no more regret it than a caſt-off garment. If

we loſe a limb by amputation; after it is ſeparated from the body, it ſoon falls into corruption, and we are indifferent about it: it will be the ſame with the whole human frame, when the animating ſpirit has left it.

Death owes the greateſt of its horrors to our imagination, and the apparatus which commonly attends it. To be teaſed, to the very laſt moment, with uſeleſs remedies, and the whiſpering nonſenſe of chattering nurſes, would be enough to make us tired of life, if we did not ſee the affliction of thoſe for whoſe ſake we would wiſh to be reſtored to the world. That, and that only, would be ſufficient to make death appear terrible; but the bitter pangs are ſoon over, and the ſoul, by taking its flight to other regions, ſoon for-

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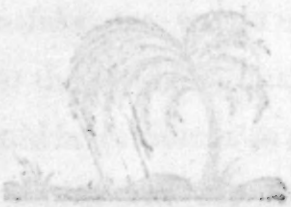
gets the griefs and troubles of human life.

" Who well improves life's ſhorteſt day
Will ſcarce regret its ſetting ray;
Contented with his ſhare of light,
Nor fear nor wiſh th' approach of night:
And when diſeaſe aſſaults the heart,
When ſickneſs triumphs over art,
Reflection on a life well paſt
Shall prove a cordial to the laſt:
This med'cine ſhall the ſoul ſuſtain,
And ſoften or ſuſpend her pain;
Shall break Death's fell tyrannic pow'r,
And calm the troubled dying hour."

COTTON.



ESSAY XIII.

On Moral Rectitude.

THE conſciouſneſs that we are poſſeſſed of an immortal ſoul ought to be a conſtant comfort in all the calamities incident to human life; and ſhould ſtimulate us in our endeavours to fulfil the various duties which are appointed to us. The time allotted to our exiſtence in this world may be conſidered as a dream, which will be diſpelled by the diſſolution of the body.—Dr. SHERLOCK, in his excellent Treatiſe concerning Death, expreſſes himſelf thus:

"That death, which is our leaving this world, is nothing elſe but our putting

ting off theſe bodies, teaches us, that it is only our union to theſe bodies which intercepts the ſight of the world. The other world is not at ſuch a diſtance from us as we may imagine. The throne of God, indeed, is at a great remove from this earth, above the third heavens, where he diſplays his glory to thoſe bleſſed ſpirits which encompaſs his throne; but as ſoon as we ſtep out of theſe bodies, we ſtep into the other world, which is not ſo properly another world (for there is the ſame heaven and earth ſtill) as a new ſtate of life. To live in theſe bodies is to live in this world; to live out of them, is to remove into the next: for, while our ſouls are confined to theſe bodies, and can look only through theſe material caſements, nothing but what is

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material can affect us; nay, nothing but what is ſo groſs, that it cannot reflect light, and convey the ſhape and colours of things with it to the eye: ſo that, though within this viſible world there be a more glorious ſcene of things than what appears to us, we perceive nothing at all of it: for this veil of fleſh parts the viſible and inviſible world. But when we put off theſe bodies, then new and ſurpriſing wonders preſent themſelves to our view: when theſe material ſpectacles are taken off, the ſoul with its own naked eyes ſees what was inviſible before: and then, we are in the other world, when we can ſee it, and converſe with it. Thus St. Paul tells us, that, *whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord; but, when we are abſent from the body,*

we are preſent with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6. 8. And methinks this is enough to cure us of our fondneſs for theſe bodies, unleſs we think it more deſirable to be confined to a priſon, and to look through a grate all our lives (which gives us but a very narrow proſpect, and that none of the beſt neither), than to be ſet at liberty to view all the glories of the world. What would we give now for the leaſt glimpſe of that inviſible world, which the firſt ſtep we take out of theſe bodies will preſent us with? There are ſuch things *as eye has not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* Death opens our eyes, enlarges our proſpect, preſents us with a new and more glorious world, which we can never ſee while we are ſhut up in fleſh,

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which ſhould make us as willing to part with this veil, as to take from our eyes the film which hinders our ſight."

The pleaſing ideas which the foregoing extract preſents to the mind, ought to be cheriſhed as a balm for all our troubles.—When we wiſh to go to diſtant places, we willingly expoſe ourſelves to the dangers attending a long voyage; though we know beforehand that we ſhall be at the mercy of all the elements: but we ſolace ourſelves with the hope that a favourable gale will convey us ſafely into the wiſhed-for port. Why then ſhould we murmur and repine at the inconveniences of a journey which may lead us to the haven of everlaſting happineſs?—Every moment of our life ſhould be employed in rendering us worthy of inhabiting the

celeſtial abodes, to which from the inſtant of our birth we are bound, and which we ſhall certainly reach, provided we are not wrecked by the whirlwind of our paſſions. Let us then watch carefully over ourſelves, and ſteer our courſe by the compaſs of rectitude.—The paſſions of the mind may be refined and improved ſo as to become the ſpring of the greateſt virtues: from their proper regulation proceeds that ſmiling ſerenity of the ſoul which exalts it above the troubles of the world. The conſcioufneſs of its dignity guards its enjoyments from being damped by the miſeries of human life.

Whoever has the leaſt reflection will own, that the inward conviction of having acted right is one of the greateſt ſatisfactions of which a human being is capable.

capable. Since then our happineſs (even in this world) is derived from an attention to that principle, it is our preſent intereſt (independently of any other) to adhere to it. To deviate from good principles ſaddens the ſoul, which finds itſelf contaminated and degraded by whatever has the ſmalleſt tendency to vice.

Dr. Burnet has well deſcribed the futility of human life, unleſs it be accompanied with the virtues that render it valuable, when he ſays—"What is this life but a circulation of little mean actions? We lie down and riſe again, dreſs and undreſs, feed and wax hungry, work or play, and are weary; and then we lie down again, and the circle returns. We ſpend the day in trifles, and when the night comes we throw ourſelves

ourſelves into the bed of folly, amongſt dreams and broken thoughts and wild imaginations. Our reaſon lies aſleep by us, and we are for the time as arrant brutes as thoſe that ſleep in the ſtalls or in the fields.—Are not the capacities of man higher than theſe? and ought not his ambition and expectation to be greater?—Let us be adventurers for another world—'tis at leaſt a fair and noble chance—and there is nothing in this worth our thoughts or our paſſions. If we ſhould be diſappointed, we are ſtill no worſe than our fellow-mortals; and if we ſucceed in our expectations, we are eternally happy."

A Dream.

ABOVE two years had elapſed ſince my trembling hands had cloſed the dying eyes of a beloved friend. Time, inſtead of aſſuaging my grief, increaſed it; every thing recalled to my mind the object of my affections; I ſaw her in my dreams; and, when I was awake, my imagination continually dwelt on the loſs I had ſuſtained. One day, during which I was alone, I underwent all the agonies of death: my laſt thought was, that I was going to rejoin

rejoin my friend, and I fainted away. I then felt as if I had been diſencumbered from a heavy load; my mental faculties were brightened and refined. The firſt object that preſented itſelf to my ſight, was the aërial form of my dear departed friend; it was ſo delicately beautiful, that it appeared like the eſſence of the body her bleſſed ſpirit once animated upon earth; ſhe ſmiled upon me with the ſame benign aſpect that uſed to enliven our ſocial hours. "Friend of my ſoul," ſaid ſhe, "the Almighty, in compaſſion to thy ſufferings, hath permitted that thou ſhouldſt have a tranſient view of the happy ſtate of thoſe who ſtrive to fulfil the duties appointed to them in the world. This is the millennium, which is vainly

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expected upon earth; no mortals can enjoy it till they have put off their corrupted garment. We are ſtill inhabitants of the world; but, no more ſubject to the infirmities which attend mortality, we contemplate freely, without any obſtruction, the wonderful works of the Almighty, the variety of which is far beyond human computation: our minds conſtantly experience thoſe divine raptures which are but feeble and momentary in human life; the time we have ſpent in the world appears now to us like the puerile occupations of childhood; we feel the ſoft and pleaſing emotions of pity when we ſee the bitter competitions of mankind about worldly trifles, and bleſs the Supreme Being for having

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kindly ſheltered us from the troubles of the world. The time we ſpent upon earth was our ſtate of probation; this is our ſtate of preparation, which will be ſoon over, for a thouſand years in this happy ſtate are ſoon elapſed: then time will ceaſe, and we ſhall be removed to that bleſſed abode where an eternal bliſs ſhall be our portion. Here congenial minds mix in everlaſting friendſhip, and are freed from thoſe peculiarities of temper which, whilſt upon earth, prevented their happineſs. Our ſouls are purified from the ſtains of worldly ſins, from which no human being has ever been free: but the Almighty is merciful as well as juſt; it is not for weak mortals to pretend to fix the limits of his goodneſs. Act well

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thy part, and confide in thy God: never repine at the lot aſſigned to thee. The evils of life are but tranſitory; but the reward, to thoſe who bear them with reſignation, is everlaſting. Thy pilgrimage upon earth may laſt a few years longer; but, O my friend! endeavour to make the allotted time uſeful to thy fellow-creatures, and let the remembrance of thy own failings make thee indulgent to the imperfections of others. Do good, for the ſake of doing good; and let not the ingratitude of a few individuals put a ſtop to thy benevolence. Never let the thought that thou haſt not the means to do what thou couldſt wiſh, prevent thee from exerting thyſelf for the benefit of others. Every human being has it in his power to be uſeful. If thou haſt

not riches to beſtow, it does not prevent thee from adminiſtering the balm of comfort and ſympathy to thoſe who feel the bitterneſs of grief, and who labour under the agony of pain. A kind look and a ſoothing word are cordials to an afflicted mind, and ſeem to leſſen the ſufferings of the body. Thou art a witneſs of my happineſs: therefore, henceforth, it would be ſelfiſh in thee to regret my abſence. Return into the world, and endeavour to make up, by activity, for the time loſt. We ſhall ſoon meet, to part no more."

This was the laſt of my heavenly viſion. The parting accents ſtill vibrated on my ear, when I returned to life, and found myſelf ſupported by the gentle Amelia. Her friendſhip,

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and the kind concern of thoſe who were about me, made life once more appear deſirable, and I wiſhed to live to put in practice the leſſons I had received.

THE END.

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